

**IMPRESSION MEDIUM FOR PRESERVING HANDPRINTS AND FOOTPRINTS
FOR REPRODUCTION AND METHOD THEREFOR**

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present application is claiming the benefit of the January 13, 2003 filing date of provisional Patent Application No. 60/439,815, entitled "KIT AND METHOD FOR MAKING AND SUBMITTING INFANT FOOT PRINTS TO SERVICE COMPANY FOR REPRODUCTION ONTO BIRTH ANNOUNCEMENTS AND RELATED GIFTS".

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

This invention relates generally to arts and crafts and, more specifically, to an impression medium for preserving handprints and footprints for reproduction.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Birth announcements and related gifts have long been used by parents to announce the birth of a child. Currently, one desiring to employ the service of an announcement printing company is generally limited to providing the infant's birth information and occasionally a photograph for reproduction onto announcements.

Alternatively, parents may purchase kits that provide a keepsake certificate and paint or ink for making an imprint on

the certificate. However, these kits do not allow for multiple announcements that can be mailed or otherwise easily shared with family and friends. Furthermore, these kits typically do not provide printed birth information, thus requiring the user to hand-write the infant birth information onto the certificate.

Therefore a need existed for an impression medium for preserving handprints and footprints for reproduction onto personalized keepsakes. Preferably, the device is used for infants. Still further, preferably, the preserved handprints and footprints allow for convenient reproduction of the handprints and footprints along with printed birth information onto a set of birth announcements or gifts such as, but not limited to, keepsake birth certificates, mugs, t-shirts, and candy wrappers.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

In accordance with one embodiment of the present invention, an impression medium for preserving at least a portion of at least one of a handprint and footprint for reproduction onto birth announcements and related gifts is disclosed. The impression medium comprises, in combination, an imprint film, a printing medium coated onto a bottom surface of the imprint film, a printing surface proximate the bottom surface of the

imprint film, and a substantially rigid backer dimensioned to be placed proximate a bottom surface of the printing surface.

In accordance with another embodiment of the present invention a method for preserving handprints and footprints for reproduction is disclosed comprising the steps of providing an impression medium for preserving at least a portion of at least one of a handprint and a footprint, recording at least one of a handprint and a footprint onto the impression medium, and copying at least one of the handprint and the footprint from the impression medium onto a personalized keepsake.

The foregoing and other objects, features, and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the following, more particular description of the preferred embodiments of the invention, as illustrated in the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 is a top view of a keepsake birth certificate prior to receiving an imprint of a handprint or a footprint.

Figure 2 is a perspective view of the keepsake birth certificate of Figure 1 being placed between an imprint film and a backer of a first embodiment of an impression medium.

Figure 3 is a top view of a hand being pressed onto the first embodiment of the impression medium. Also shown is an

imprint protector sheet that must be removed prior to pressing the hand onto the impression medium.

Figure 4 is a top view of a printing surface.

Figure 5 is a perspective view of a foot being pressed onto a second embodiment of the impression medium.

Figure 6 is a perspective view of a printing surface being removed from between an imprint film and a backer of the second embodiment of the impression medium after an imprint of a footprint has been recorded onto the printing surface.

Figure 7 is front view of a footprint recorded onto the printing surface shown in Figure 6.

Figure 8 is a perspective view of a bottom surface of a hand coated with a chemically reactive solution.

Figure 9 is a perspective view of the hand coated with a chemically reactive solution of Figure 8 being pressed onto a sheet of chemically reactive paper.

Figure 10 is a perspective view of a handprint of the hand of Figure 9 recorded onto the chemically reactive paper.

Figure 11 is a perspective view of a foot being pressed onto an inkpad.

Figure 12 is a perspective view of a bottom surface of the foot shown in Figure 11 coated with ink.

Figure 13 is a perspective view of the coated foot of Figure 12 being removed after a footprint has been recorded onto paper card stock.

Figure 14 is a top view of footprints copied onto a personalized birth announcement.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The novel features believed characteristic of the invention are set forth in the appended claims. The invention will best be understood by reference to the following detailed description of illustrated embodiments when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, wherein like reference numerals and symbols represent like elements.

The inventor has created an impression medium, referred to generically as impression medium 10, that allows for the convenient recording of at least a portion of a footprint 31 (shown in Figures 6, 7, 13 and 14) or handprint 30 (shown in Figure 10) for reproduction onto personalized keepsakes.

Referring now to Figures 2-3, the preferred embodiment of the impression medium, referred to as impression medium 10a, is shown. The main components of the impression medium 10a include an imprint film 14 (shown in Figures 2, 3, 5 and 6), a printing medium 16 (shown in Figures 6 and 7) coated onto a bottom surface of the imprint film 14 (shown in Figures 2, 3, 5 and 6),

a printing surface 19 (shown in Figures 4, 6, and 7) proximate the bottom surface of the imprint film 14, and a substantially rigid backer 22 (shown in Figures 2 and 6) dimensioned to be placed proximate a bottom surface of the printing surface 19. While it is preferred that the substantially rigid backer 22 be comprised of cardboard, it should be understood that substantial benefit may be derived from using plastic or any other substantially rigid material.

While, in the preferred embodiment, the impression medium 10a is substantially rectangular, as shown for example in Figures 2, 3, 5, and 6, it should be understood that it is within the spirit and scope of this invention to provide an alternatively shaped impression medium, as desired for particular uses.

An alternative embodiment of the impression medium 10a, referred to as impression medium 10b, is shown in Figures 5 and 6. Impression medium 10b is essentially the same as impression medium 10a, except that the size of the imprint film 14 in impression medium 10b is greater. Both impression medium 10a and impression medium 10b have a frame 11 (shown in Figures 2, 3, 5 and 6) coupled about the imprint film 14. Preferably, a first edge 13 (shown in Figure 2) of the frame 11 is pivotally coupled to a corresponding first edge 23 (shown in Figure 2) of the backer 22 so as to allow the backer 22 to be folded so as to

be proximate the printing surface 19, although it should be clear that substantial benefit could be derived from an alternative embodiment of the present invention in which the backer 22 is coupled along another edge to the frame 11 or in which the backer 22 is completely separate from the frame 11.

Referring now to Figures 2-3, impression medium 10a comprises a frame 11 that defines at least three windows 12 dimensioned to expose at least a portion of the imprint film 14. Preferably, the exposed portions of the imprint film 14 are sized to fit a hand 32 (shown in Figure 3) or a foot 34 (shown in Figure 5).

Referring now to figures 5 and 6, the frame 11 of impression medium 10b defines one window 12 dimensioned to expose a greater portion of the imprint film 14.

While Figures 3 and 5 depict an entire hand 32 and an entire foot 34, respectively, being pressed onto the imprint film 14, it should be clearly understood that substantial benefit may be derived from using a finger, a toe, a palm, a heel or any other portion of a hand 32 or foot 34. It should also be understood that although an infant hand 32 or infant foot 34 is preferred, substantial benefit may also be derived from using the hand 32 or foot 34 of a child or even an adult.

Referring now to Figures 3-4, it is preferred that the impression medium 10a have an imprint protector sheet 24 (shown

in Figure 3) dimensioned to be placed between the bottom surface of the imprint film 14 (shown in Figure 3) and a top surface 21 (shown in Figure 4) of the printing surface 19 (shown in Figure 4). The imprint protector sheet 24 prevents any handprints 30 or footprints 31 from being made inadvertently while handling the impression medium 10a.

Prior to recording the handprint 30 or footprint 31, the imprint protector sheet 24 should be removed (shown in Figure 3). A printing surface 19 should then be placed between the imprint film 14 and the backer 22. It is preferred that the printing surface 19 be either an imprint sheet 25 (shown in Figures 4, 6, and 7), card stock 26 (shown in Figure 13), or artist board (not shown). It should be clearly understood, however, that substantial benefit may also be derived from using paper or any other medium capable of recording a handprint 30 or footprint 31.

By pressing the hand 32 (shown in Figure 3) or foot 34 (shown in Figure 5) onto the imprint film 14, the printing medium 16 (preferably ink) is transferred onto the printing surface 19 in the shape of a handprint 30 or footprint 31. This handprint 30 and footprint 31 may then be copied onto a birth announcement 29 (shown in Figure 14), a card, a mug, a shirt, a candy wrapper, or any other form of a personalized keepsake.

Alternatively, a user may insert a pre-printed keepsake birth certificate 27 (shown in Figures 1 and 2) between the imprint film 14 and the backer 22 of the impression medium. After pressing a hand 32 (shown in Figure 3) or a foot 34 (shown in Figure 5) onto the imprint film 14, the printing medium 16 will be transferred directly onto the keepsake birth certificate 27.

Although it is preferred that ink 17 (shown in Figure 11) be the printing medium 16 used to record the handprint 30 or footprint 31 and that a type of paper product be the printing surface 19, it should be understood that substantial benefit may be derived from an alternative embodiment of the impression medium 10. For example, referring to Figures 8-10, a bottom surface 33 (shown in Figure 8) of a hand 32 (shown in Figures 8-9 (or alternatively a foot, not shown) can be first coated with a chemically reactive solution 18. The coated hand 32 (or foot) can then be pressed onto chemically reactive paper 28 (shown in Figures 9-10). Finally, Figure 10 shows the resulting handprint 30 that appears on the chemically reactive paper 28.

Referring now to Figures 11-13, an alternative method for preserving handprints and footprints is shown. A footprint 31 (or handprint) may also be recorded by first pressing a bottom surface 35 (shown in Figure 12) of a foot 34 (or a hand) onto an inkpad 36 (shown in Figure 11). The bottom surface 35 of the

foot 34 (or hand) will then be coated with ink 17 (shown in Figure 12). The foot 34 (or hand) is then pressed onto a printing surface 19 (shown in Figure 13), such as cardstock 26 or artist board (not shown). Figure 13 shows the resulting footprint 31 that appears on the cardstock 26. The footprint 31 (or handprint) can then be copied, such as by photocopy or some other standard copying means, onto a birth announcement 29 (shown in Figure 14) or some other personalized keepsake. If desired, the printing surface 19 may be sent by, for example, a parent or a guardian, to a manufacturer of various items as described above, who will place the handprint 30 or footprint 31 onto the items manufactured by the manufacturer for distribution to those people designated by the parent.